

FREEDOM

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www.freedompress.org.uk

Vol 74 • SEPTEMBER 2013

WE SMASHED THE FASH!

Three hundred protesters are nicked... but EDL kept out of Tower Hamlets once again

Over 5,000 people joined a demonstration to prevent the English Defence League from marching through East London's Tower Hamlets on 7th September.

A measly 500 EDL supporters had gathered with the intention of marching to Altab Ali Park, which is named after a Bangladeshi man who died in a racist attack in 1978. The EDL marched down Queen Elizabeth Street and across Tower Bridge to Aldgate, but were prevented by protesters and police from going any further.

Despite rather grandiosely dubbing this march 'the return', the EDL has a pretty rubbish (read basically non-existent) track record of actually getting into Tower Hamlets for a proper protest. The closest they managed was in September 2011, when their coach broke down while passing through Mile End Road on the way back from a somewhat gratuitously violent and drunken rally in Aldgate (stopping briefly in Whitechapel, where a few members staggered off the coach for an abortive attempt at a 'scuffle' with locals). Broken down and helpless on

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LENS CAP LONDON



Counter-protesters against the EDL demo on 7th September were held in a police kettle outside the Royal Mint near London's Tower Bridge.

Photo © Max Reeves

LOAN SHARKS BITE

Annual interest rates of 6,000% and more, murder threats, stalking mothers at school gates... This is the face of loan sharking today as Cameron hacks away at security nets for Britain's poor.

Manchester gang Ian Parsons and brothers Christopher and Mark Weaver were sentenced this month to 32, 18 and three months respectively for illegally lending to and harassing a series of young unemployed and low-waged single women.

The women, many of them mothers, were all subject to a sustained campaign of threats of murder and violence when they could not meet repayments on the gang's loans scheme. The gang texted photos of themselves to victims with messages such as "When I get you I'm gonna end you" and "He'll snatch you and break your jaw". They even sent

mock-ups of a tabloid front page which said "MR MONEY LOAN SHARKS ARE PUTTING THOUSANDS IN HOSPITAL".

Sadly, the last few months have seen a sharp increase in such cases, as the benefits system fails more and more of Britain's poorest and most vulnerable.

And it's not just illegal loan sharks who are screwing people over. The Queen actually owns the headquarters of Wonga, which is Britain's biggest legal pay day loans firm. Cosy. Wonga like to charge desperate customers annual interest rates of up to 5,853%.

There are murmurings about imposing stricter regulations on loan firms but the question of why so many need to use them in the first place seems far more relevant.

Charlotte Dingle

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ISSN 0016-0504



NEWS

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LENS CAP AURORA'S PARADE



The Arctic sea ice is melting to record lows and oil companies like Shell are lining up to exploit the fragile Arctic. To draw attention to this, on 15th September a giant people-powered polar bear, Aurora, was hauled through central London. Aurora is a giant super-puppet, the size of a double decker bus.

'Mental patient' costumes withdrawn

In a truly staggering display of sensitivity, intellect and understanding that ATOS would be proud of, supermarkets Asda and Tesco thought it would be a good lark this month to sell 'mental patient' and 'psycho ward' costumes amongst the traditional Halloween ghost, vampire and zombie garb. That infamous bastion of ethical business practices Amazon was in on the act too, also selling both the 'psycho ward' outfit and a deeply cute and charming child's 'psycho surgeon' costume on its website.

These super-hilarious buys came with various accoutrements which included a gruesome mask, fake blood, a plastic meat cleaver and a plastic jaw restraint. The 'mental patient' costume was in the style of a strait jacket and the 'psycho ward' outfit had the word 'COMMITTED' slapped across the back. The product details on Tesco's website said: "Everyone will be running away from you in fear in this mental patient fancy dress costume... it's a terrifying Halloween option." Asda's website offered customers the chance to: "Dress up as the most thrilling psycho killer character of all time in this Psycho Ward costume!"

It's okay though, because following a public outcry all three culprits have taken the costumes out of circulation and issued the usual hollow apologies. Online auction site eBay is also apparently 'reviewing' similar costumes on its site with a view to removing them. A representative from Asda said: "We're deeply sorry one of our fancy dress costumes has upset people. This was an unacceptable error – the product was withdrawn immediately." An 'error' and not

a mistake? It slipped and fell into their supermarket, perhaps? The poor loves.

Meanwhile, Twitter remains alive with tweets from real mental patients posting photos of themselves in genuine mental patient costumes with the hashtag #mentalpatient. These include such terrifying items as t-shirts, jeans and socks, with some people even waving spine-chilling accessories like cups of tea and kittens. The scariest thing anyone tweeted was an admission that they liked to knit multicoloured toy poodles. Okay, perhaps that is a bit scary.

Anyway, we look forward to seeing the replacement range of costumes hit the racks. Perhaps they'll start with the blood-curdling 'chemo patient' set, complete with bald wig, bottle of morphine, syringe and sick bag? No, we didn't think so.

Charlotte Dingle





Bedroom tax challenged

Draconian housing benefit law taken to court by disabled claimants

After several months of destroying the living conditions of disabled people – sorry, we mean preventing greedy malingering scroungers from living in sprawling mansions at the taxpayer's expense – our benevolent and caring government has selflessly granted lawyers the permission to legally challenge the bedroom tax.

On the 25th September, ten disabled people were officially told they could take their cases to the Court of Appeal. Which, let's face it, is more than a bunch of cripes really deserves.

The controversial bedroom tax, which decrees that anyone on housing benefit with an 'extra' room in their property must have housing benefit deducted or move to another property, was brought in on 1st April this

year. Two-thirds of the approximately 660,000 homes affected by the bedroom tax have a disabled resident. Many of the disabled people affected by the tax really want that 'extra' room – because, er, it isn't actually extra. There are many very valid reasons for this. They might need additional space for special equipment, be unable to share a bed with a partner or a sibling because of their disability, require an extra room for a part-time carer to stay in or already live in a house which has been carefully (and often expensively) adapted to their specific needs. These subtleties have so far escaped the government, who seem to be operating along the rather reductive lines of "A bedroom is a bedroom and a person is a person". Or perhaps more accurately, "The disabled should either miraculously recover or have rich families."

On top of this, those on disability benefits also potentially face the same issue of property availability affecting everyone else subjected to the bedroom tax.

Estimates suggest that a staggering 19 out of 20 households affected by the tax are struggling to be rehoused because of limited local social housing stock.

Unsurprisingly, the numbers of bedroom tax related suicides and attempted suicides are now spiralling. But rather than simply holding their hands up and admitting that even for evil Tory despots this is all 'a bit much', the government have instead grudgingly allowed the disabled to issue a legal challenge to the tax... and that's it. How jolly jolly nice of them.

As has been widely pointed out, so far head benefit scrounger her Maj and family seem to have escaped the attentions of the DWP. Able bodied and rolling in it, they still probably haven't even seen half the rooms in their houses. One rule for them...

On which note – sorry, Mr Cameron, but trotting out another photo of Ivan doesn't absolve you. In fact, you know, it just makes it much much worse.

Charlotte Dingle

We smashed the fash!

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Mile End Road, the coach was pelted with missiles and the 44 EDL members inside it had to be escorted on to a replacement bus by police.

More recently, EDL leader Tommy Robinson and his henchman Kevin Carroll famously attempted a 'charity walk' through the borough at the end of June this year, raising funds to 'support our troops' after the murder of soldier Lee Rigby. They rather unsubtly planned to walk to Woolwich, where Rigby was murdered, via the East London Mosque in Whitechapel. All totally peaceful of course, and the inclusion of the mosque along their route purely incidental. Unsurprisingly, they were thwarted once again.

The YouTube video of this 'charity walk' attempt probably holds the record for the highest number of times the words 'charity walk!' have been squealed desperately in seven minutes and 19 seconds... and somebody really needs to give it the Muslamic Rayguns Remix (also on YouTube – if you haven't heard it you haven't lived, really you haven't) treatment.

The enormous numbers on this month's counter-protest kept an EDL march away from the borough once again, but the proceedings weren't without negative incident on our side. A whopping three hundred people – unfortunately mostly anti-fash but also including Tommy Robinson – were arrested

and released on bail after clashes with the cops on Commercial Road. The arrestees were carted away to Sutton police station in double decker buses. Two hundred and eighty six of those arrested were nicked for storming through police lines to get to the EDL as they crossed Tower Bridge and the remaining 14 were done for other offences including violent disorder and criminal damage. They will all face charges next month.

Charlotte Dingle

If you would like to contribute to the defence fund, make cheques payable to Legal Defence & Monitoring Group and send them to BM Box HAVEN, London WC1N 3XX.

THE BIG PICTURE



It was the intention of EDL supporters to march to Altab Ali Park, above, on 7th September. Altab Ali was a young Bengali garment worker murdered nearby in an unprovoked attack by three racists in 1978.

Oil on troubled waters

Citizen Goldsmith examines the spurious justifications for intervention in Syria

The 'International Community' is still thrashing out its response to the emerging evidence that chemical weapons have been used in the Syrian civil war. Many are hell-bent on blaming the Syrian government for the attacks and have already decided to act on this assumption, whatever that may entangle. However, the evidence that this accusation is correct is less than clear.

What do we know?

- At least 355 people have died from poisoning from some sort of chemical weapon, according to doctors from Médecins Sans Frontières.
- Preliminary evidence from tests suggests strongly that the chemical agent used was Sarin gas.
- That is it, for the time being, UN inspectors have not come to any conclusion about the origin of the chemical agent.

What are people trying to lead us to believe?

The Syrian government planned and carried out an attack with chemical weapons. We are told this by US politicians, and the grounds they give for believing it are intelligence reports from various sources – mostly MOSSAD. Please also bear in mind that the Saudi security services, who also have input into this intelligence feed, are run by Prince Bandar bin Sultan, who appears to have been supplying the Al Qaeda led faction in Syria with Sarin gas. His wheeling and dealing to suit his own agenda has recently included threats to Russia that he will provide equipment and money to Chechens to ensure that people die during the Winter Olympics unless the Russian government drop their support for Assad.

What evidence is there that Syrian rebels carried out the atrocity?

Plenty of evidence is available that they did, and the indications are that it was an accident perpetrated by ill-trained guerrillas who may not even have been aware that they were handling chemical agents. There have been previous such attacks. A freelance journalist with impeccable credentials and no discernible axe to grind has given detailed feedback on what he garnered from interviews with rebels themselves, doctors and members of the public. He has provided a reasonable account of how the rebels, ill-trained and supplied with both Sarin gas and the means to deliver it with rocket launchers, had mishandled the gas and it had killed twelve of them in a tunnel:

"My son came to me two weeks ago asking what I thought the weapons were that he had been asked to carry," said Abu Abdel-Moneim, the father of a rebel fighting to unseat Assad, who lives in Ghouta.

Abdel-Moneim said his son and 12 other rebels were killed inside of a tunnel used to store weapons provided by a Saudi militant, known as Abu Ayesha, who was leading a fighting battalion. The father described the weapons as having a "tube-like structure" while others were like a "huge gas bottle".

Ghouta townspeople said the rebels were using mosques and private houses to sleep while storing their weapons in tunnels.

Abdel-Moneim said his son and the others died during the chemical weapons attack. That same day, the militant group Jabhat al-Nusra, which is linked to al-Qaeda, announced that it would similarly attack civilians in the Assad regime's heartland of Latakia on Syria's western coast, in purported retaliation" (Source: Mint News Agency).

What evidence is there that the Syrian regime carried out the attack?

Various intelligence reports exist, many of which have been withheld from the public. Typical of the ones that have been released is



the one from the Joint Intelligence Organisation, which is couched in the same speculative terms as the infamous Iraq Dossier – from which, of course, it could easily be concluded that Iraq didn't have any WMDs with an adequate understanding of the nuances of the English language. This is what they 'concluded':

"There is no credible intelligence or other evidence to substantiate the claims or the possession of CW by the opposition. The JIC has therefore concluded that there are no plausible alternative scenarios to regime responsibility" (Source: Joint Intelligence Organisation).

Not exactly an objective assessment, especially considering that they ignored claims and concrete evidence that are in the public domain (see above).

What can we conclude?

That it is actually more likely to have been the rebels than the Syrian government, but it is possible that both sides were responsible for attacks – or accidents – that occurred on or about the same date.

Where does that leave the US government?

Not in any position to assume the right to make an immediate punitive military strike. Especially considering it will alter the balance of the struggle, which the rebels are losing, and is clearly aimed at regime change, which is a violation of the UN Charter. The USA is fond of acting unilaterally as if it has some superior moral authority. What in fact it systematically does is act in its own interests, which may be political as much as material. America's objective in this situation is simply to decapitate the state of Syria and flood the country with diplomats and entrepreneurs just like they tried to do in Iraq and Afghanistan. Clearly benefiting from the new prospects for oil is an aim, but politically, they are mired in the politics of the region so their strategy for achieving those aims and objectives is defined by that context. They have slept with the dogs of The Kingdom and caught rabies.



ANALYSIS

Rob the rich

The illegalist philosophy of Alfredo Maria Bonanno

On 4th October 2009, Trikala, Greece, a bank has been robbed at gunpoint. Police stop a car driven by two men, and a cursory search reveals €46,900 in cash. The men are arrested on suspicion of armed robbery. One of them is 72 years old.

The septuagenarian is Alfredo Maria Bonanno, who had already been incarcerated for his involvement in anarchist organisations in Italy. His essay *Armed Joy* was ordered to be destroyed and he was imprisoned after its initial publication in the 1970s. Bonanno's writing and, most importantly, his actions have something to teach anyone who would claim the title of anarchist. In a quote perhaps best capturing his urgency: "Hurry up, comrade, shoot at once on the policeman, the judge, the wealthy, before a new police will hinder you. Hurry up and say no, before a new repression convinces you that to say no is nonsensical and crazy and that you should accept the hospitality of an asylum. Hurry up and attack the capital, before a new ideology makes it sacred for you. Hurry up and refuse work, before a new sophist tells you: Work makes you free. Hurry up and play. Hurry up and arm yourself."

His advocacy of militant playfulness – armed joy – does not need to be interpreted literally but his immediacy for taking action and taking it now, is something that all those engaged in the struggle for the destruction of the State can learn from. Following his philosophy is a call to physical arms, asking us to grab our guns and start blasting every emblem of authority and repression we see. Rather it encourages us to consider the limitations we place on ourselves, on the control imparted upon us through the State, the media, the social status quo, that daily prevents us from actualising our potential and making bold, significant steps towards transforming ourselves and our world, irrespective of the threat of imprisonment, injury and even death.

"It's easy. You can do it by yourself, or with a bunch of trusted comrades. You don't need to have great means or technical competence. The capital is vulnerable, if you are determined



to act." His ideology, sometimes termed illegalism, sometimes insurrectionary anarchism, is an interpretation of anarchist thought that champions an extreme individualism, a refusal to be trapped under banners and organisations, and instead allows a fluid, flexible continuum of free associations to achieve a common aim – the destruction of the State. The stance of illegalism is different from expropriative anarchism in that it advocates criminality and the assault on capital as a way of life. An attack on wealth is not seen as an attack on our fellow human beings.

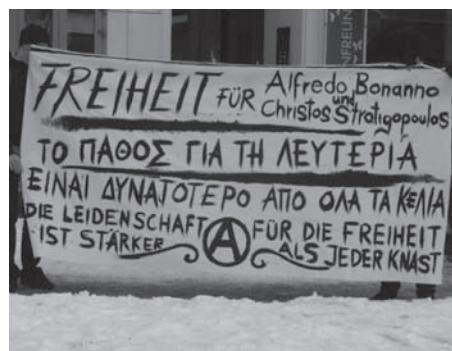
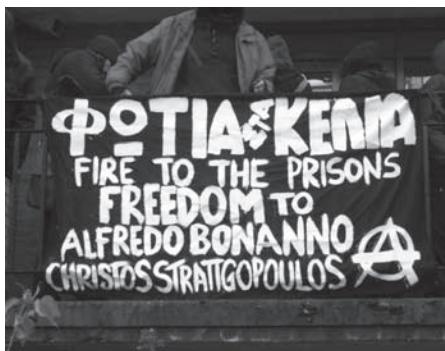
Most importantly for all of us, Bonanno's example urges us to not waste time debating the minutiae of what comes after the revolution, but instead to get on with making it happen in the here and now. It provides a thrilling embodiment of life-long activism, of casting aside the idea that radical action is for the young alone. For Bonanno, action is critical. "The man who acts is not the man with a destiny, but the man who has understood." Whatever our beliefs on how the future should be, it is how we manifest our ideals today that is all important.

Perhaps it is tempting to dismiss Bonanno as an anachronism, a throw-back to the days of bomb-lobbing anarchists committing regicide – the source of the current misrep-

resentation of anarchy as being synonymous with chaos. Yet his involvement in the bank robbery of 2009, despite his advanced years, represents a historical link between the militant left-wing organisations of the twentieth century and emerging groups of young people radicalised by economic chaos and government repression in the twenty-first. These threads are invaluable in understanding the evolution and lineage of anarchist struggle as being connected through the actions of individuals who are themselves interrelated through a mass movement with a solid history and a clear stance against the State.

Take the case of the young Greeks arrested and tortured by police under anti-terrorist laws for a double-robbery in Velveta, Greece, in February of 2013. These kids – Nikos Romanos, Dimitris Politis, Andreas-Dimitris Mpourzoukos and Giannis Michailidis – were 'next door kids' in the words of those who knew them, yet their actions and their rhetoric reveal them as comrades-in-arms with Bonanno and all revolutionaries who, to quote their statement, "consider [it] a given that there is a clear separating line behind us and the system, which marks the war between two worlds. The world of sovereignty, repression and submission and the world of freedom, which we create and keep alive through the restless struggle against authority." The polemic is rich, but the cliché stands that actions speak louder than words, revealing how brittle the spiel is of those who would claim to be anarchists without ever daring to break the laws that bind them, to cross the line separating those two worlds. In the words of the Velveta Four: "We are remorseless anarchists and we do not seek sympathy, compassion or understanding... We seek the spread of our values and practices and we will fight for this until our last word, until our last bullet."

Gyorgy Furiosa



DISABLED PEOPLE AGAINST CUTS

I was part of a group of disabled people who blocked the main doors at the BBC. Since the awful spectre of The Coalition took power, the BBC has effectively been an uncritical mouthpiece for the government's agenda and has reinforced the myth of disabled scroungers and the feckless working class. Disabled People Against Cuts and our Scottish sister campaign, the Black Triangle Anti Defamation League, have been at the forefront of the campaign against the BBC's lies.

On the second of September DPAC and the Black Triangle Campaign blocked the main doorway at the BBC for over two hours. We asked for a representative from the 'British Broadcasting Corporation' to meet with us to discuss our concerns. Instead, all we got was a jobsworth security person who said "we had no right to be there" even though we all pay a TV licence. To those in charge of the BBC, we are obviously not part of Cameron's 'Condemn Britain' and therefore not worth meeting. This made us all realise that disabled people are not part of the corporate capitalist world agenda and that any type of 'government' is there to reinforce the status of those in power, and in no way assists any of us who are non-profitable to the State. Disabled people seem to be discarded. Some 73 of them a week die in modern Britain. Many so-called radical union leaders are selling out as their members' interests are deemed non-compatible with those of us who are disabled and on benefit.

This is where your newspaper is invaluable to those of us who realise that the only type of society that disabled people have a viable stake in is one based on consensus and mutual support, where a person's worth is not defined by what he or she can produce. I would ask your readers to refuse to pay the BBC licence fee, and come and join our protests. Bring your experience, get involved. We are strictly a non-violent campaign – this is really important as many of our group find violent confrontation very hard to deal with because of their life experiences. We welcome anyone who is disabled and opposed to the government's 'Austerity Measures'. We also welcome supporters and those who are interested in evolving the protest!

Our protest was filmed and put up on YouTube, but the film was promptly taken down (I get the feeling that the BBC, or rather their security, had a word with YouTube!). If there was any way that your paper could do a regularly published article on our protests it would be wonderful.

Cripple Upstart!

See the DPAC website at www.dpac.uk.net for more information.

Understanding Thatcherism

Was Thatcher really trying to shrink the state?

Thatcherism is often blamed by the left for the current state of social and economic crisis. Indeed, what is called 'neoliberal' capitalism – perhaps *the* central target of left-wing critique in the current period – is often said to have begun in the UK with Thatcher. So understanding Thatcherism is an important task for British critics of contemporary capitalism. However, the reality of Margaret Thatcher's government bears little relation to the ideological constructions associated with it. According to the ideology, Thatcherite policies involve shrinking the state, in order to allow private enterprise and the market to flourish free of government interference. A look at the facts soon casts doubt on this picture.

An appropriate measure of the 'size' of the state is public spending as a percentage of GDP. From the election of Thatcher till the end of Tory rule 17 years later, public spending as a percentage of GDP declined by approximately 3% – by comparison, spending declined by *more* than 3% in the first four years of Blair's Labour government. Clearly, then, *real world* Thatcherism is not about substantially shrinking the state.

There was, however, a *shift* in government spending, away from measures benefiting the general population – public services, social security, and so on – and towards those benefiting industry and finance. Thatcher's support of the British arms industry was particularly strong. She provided £1.5 billion in loan guarantees to the horrendous Saudi Arabian regime to secure the biggest arms deal in UK history. The deal was negotiated by Sir Colin Chandler, who later ruefully

reflected that: "The word 'repressive' is of course a pretty subjective one... Is it really up to us to make these judgements?" Thatcher further illegally directed hundreds of millions from foreign aid funds to secure arms contracts with the Malaysian regime and threw away £1 billion of taxpayers' money to prop up Saddam Hussein's bankrupt regime and help out arms companies.

This support extended beyond the arms industry, to British capitalists in general. Harvard Professor Philip Wellons examined Thatcher's use of taxpayer money to support British capital's risky exports to 'dodgy markets'. He concludes that the policy, far from being favourable to free markets, was a form of 'neo-mercantilism'. Thatcher further attacked free markets by sharply increasing a kind of trade barrier called non-tariff barriers (NTBs). Britain became one of the world leaders in using a type of NTB described by one expert as "the most insidious form of protectionism" which "raises prices, reduces competition, and reinforces cartel behaviour".

We must re-evaluate our ideas concerning Thatcherism, and neoliberal capitalism more generally. Anarchists have long understood that the state and capital are not competitors, but natural allies. A close examination of Thatcher's actual record demonstrates this. Of course, the ones to lose out from Thatcher's policies were the general population, who under her rule suffered a doubling of the rate of poverty. As the current Tory-Liberal government embraces Thatcherism with passion, it should be pointed out, time and time again, that this is not down to their belief in a small-state, pro-market ideology. It's a resurgence of a deeper commitment of the Iron Lady – her commitment to savage class warfare.

James Arnold



INTERNATIONAL

NEWS IN BRIEF

ITALY: Throughout 2013 riots have been spreading across Italy's estate of immigration detention centres. Things have come to a head in September, following a renewed fight-back by the detainees, against their imprisonment and the horrendous and degrading conditions they are being kept in. The levels of resistance have been so great that five of the thirteen detention centres have needed to close entirely, whilst the remaining eight are running on significantly reduced capacity. There are less than 50% of places still available for use. The government claim that they will be 'reflecting' on the living conditions of the detainees, and will see if any lessons need to be learned.

POLAND: Following a building contractor in the Polish town of Grojec not receiving his weekly wage, he telephoned his manager and advised him that unless he received the monies he was owed, he would be contacting the health and safety inspectors and telling them about the illegal work practices that are going on.

His manager and a hired goon then kidnapped the worker and took him to a secluded forest. In the forest they ordered him to dig his own grave. When he refused they attacked him with an axe, leaving him with serious neck injuries and a severed finger. The boss and his henchman have been caught and are facing lengthy prison sentences.

ROMANIA: For over a week around 16,000 Romanians have been protesting against a planned mining operation in the mountain town of Rosia Montana.

People are angry at the environmental cost of the project, and at the attitude of the government and big business – both of whom are running roughshod over public opinion.

The mining project will see the flattening of four mountain peaks, the closing of 16 towns and villages, and the use of 12,000 tonnes of cyanide, which will be used in the mining process.

SPAIN: For the last few months around a hundred people from many backgrounds and nationalities have been living together in an abandoned block of flats in the Catalan town of Salt. The majority of the families had been evicted from their homes by the banks due to not being able to keep up with their mortgage payments. The residents have undertaken numerous DIY projects, and developed vegetable patches around the building.

As you would expect, the state takes a dim view of homeless people taking matters into their own hands by turning abandoned buildings into homes, and have been running a dirty tricks campaign, cementing locks and turning off the water supply. Residents are worried that an eviction will take place at some point in the run up to Christmas.

LENS CAP MEXICO



Hundreds of striking school teachers in Mexico City have clashed with riot police during a protest over educational reform. Dozens were injured as teachers refused the government's instruction to vacate a square and end the demonstration. Despite film footage showing the police using gas and water cannon, the government claim that the police were unarmed, and that the teachers were all anarchists, and it was they who were intent on causing trouble.

Poland to scrap eight-hour day

More than 100,000 Polish workers have taken to the streets in an attempt to stop the government implementing a raft of new 'anti-worker' employment legislation that will see the guaranteed eight-hour working day, increased working week, fair pensions, minimum wage, raised retirement age and extravagant luxuries such as 'permanent' contracts consigned to history.

Poland's three largest trade unions called the day of protest, despite threats from the government that if they did, then the law would be changed to scrap paid trade union activities.

Troubles in the Euro-zone over the last five years have had a devastating impact on the Polish economy, with unemployment currently at around 13%. The state has used this to their advantage when it comes to

their labour 'reforms'. Not dissimilar to the approach of other countries, such as the UK, the government are pushing the idea that 'you have a job and a home' so in these dark economic times you should be grateful. To an extent, the Polish working class have accepted the bullshit and are much less willing to fight the state and its open attacks on the hard-fought basic employment rights.

The centre-right coalition that has dreamt up the wide ranging attacks on Poland's workers are in the (not uncommon) position of not having to worry about opposition parties offering an alternative. All of the political mainstream in Poland are pushing the bosses' agenda. Get screwed over by a crook in a blue tie, or a crook in a red tie... some choice!

Luther Blissett

Notes from the US

Spying

In a twist to the NSA spying scandal, it was revealed (by Reuters) at the start of the month, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) has routinely been using information obtained from wire-tapping, mail-opening, intercepts and other forms of surveillance to bring about prosecutions against drug users and suppliers. The difference, though, is that

they have then been concealing the source of this information used for prosecution in a process known as 'Parallel Construction'. Those prosecuted are not made aware of the circumstances under which cases against them have been brought and this renders them effectively unable to mount a proper defence.

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Greek anti-fascist murdered

Anti-fascist rapper and trade unionist killed by large gang of neo-nazi thugs from the fascist Golden Dawn Party

Pavlos Fyssas, 34, had been out for a late night walk with his partner and some friends in the Keratsini area of Piraeus. He was spotted by a group of around twenty masked men dressed in paramilitary-style attire. They made no effort to hide their hostility and made it clear that Fyssas and his friends were not welcome in the area.

The fascists followed the small group of friends until another ten thugs swelled their already overwhelming numbers. They then surrounded Fyssas and his friends on a street corner.

During the stand-off a car approached down the wrong way of a one-way street. The driver got out of his vehicle and proceeded



to stab Fyssas several times – leaving at least one stab wound in his heart.

The whole incident took place in front of the Greek police, who only got involved once the fascists had dispersed.

Despite witnesses begging the police (who were heavily armed with guns) to stop the attack, they just shrugged their shoulders, saying, “What can we do? There are too many”.

They reluctantly arrested a 45 year old man carrying a knife on suspicion of murder. Unfortunately the ambulance took over half an hour to arrive, which was too late for Fyssas, who was pronounced dead on his arrival at the local hospital.

In the days following the murder of Pavlos Fyssas, countless protests, pickets and vigils were held across Greece, involving tens of thousands of people. Clashes between protesters and the police were commonplace, resulting in scores of arrests and injuries.



This, the latest attack against an active member of the Greek ‘left’, however shocking, should come as no surprise – neither should the Golden Dawn’s relationship with the Greek police. At best the police just turn a blind eye to the fascists activities, and at worst they actively join them in their campaign against immigrants, and the organised working class.

Bowing to public pressure, the Greek state has ordered a clampdown on the Golden Dawn. Several senior members, including the party leader, have been arrested on charges of murder, assault, and money laundering. Whilst this move may result in some short-term relief to immigrants and those on the left, fascism – as history shows – can never be beaten by a state clampdown. All that will happen in the medium to long term is their organisation gaining wider support.

Luther Blissett

Notes from the US

◀ page 8

The relatively small state capital of New Hampshire, Concord, wants to bring tanks to its streets. A grant request by the Concord Police Department for US\$258,000 (£170,000) to the Department of Homeland Security for an armoured BearCat vehicle is to counter a very real terrorist threat, apparently: the local ‘Free Staters’ and Occupy New Hampshire.

Freedom has reported before on the potentially disastrous Keystone XL pipeline, which would transport oil north-south all across the United States. This is oil derived in highly destructive fashion from the tar sands in Canada to the Gulf. Sufficiently controversial to prompt Obama to investigate and ostensibly delay the project, it has mobilised activists along its route and beyond. It emerged in mid-August that sheriffs in Oklahoma spied

on a training camp for activists opposed to the project. That operation thwarted a planned blockade of TransCanada’s oil reserves in Cushing, Oklahoma by stopping some participants even before they reached the protest site. Law enforcement infiltrated the Great Plains Tar Sands Resistance camp in what appears to be a nationwide spying effort: as usual the scrutiny is on those who would save, not destroy, the planet.

Edward Snowden, on making his findings public earlier this year, said that his greatest fear was that people (Americans) would shrug their shoulders and carry on as normal. If new revelations of his at the very end of August about the ‘Special Collection Services’ programme don’t stir people, it’s hard to see what might. That ‘Special Collection Services’

programme is one in which the National Security Agency spies on 80 countries’ embassies and consulates as well as the United Nations in contravention of the UN’s Espionage Act.

Racism

Protests continue in Chicago after 25-year-old guest-worker Sarai Rodriguez was denied a kidney transplant because of her undocumented status. She died in August.

In Georgia 15-year-old Anthony Stokes has been barred from receiving a heart transplant because of a “history of non-compliance”. Amazingly, what that really means, in addition to brushes with the law, is low marks at school.

Louis Further

ECONOMICS

Anger is an energy

Steve Ash looks at the fight against fracking

In 2012 the coalition government announced that the exploitation of shale gas and oil was high on its list of priorities as a solution to Britain's energy problems. Soon after Balcombe, in the heart of the formerly loyal Tory south, was selected as the initial site for experimental drilling and possible hydraulic fracturing (fracking), with tax breaks offered to companies willing to take on the job. In July this year a licence to begin drilling in the area was finally given by the Environment Agency to Cuadrilla Resources, Britain's main drilling and fracking company.

Fracking is not new to Britain – it has been performed to some extent since the 1960s, but never on the scale proposed today. Local residents immediately objected, and Cuadrilla moved to reassure them the process was no risk and that they had no plans to frack anyway. The locals were not hoodwinked, however.

Conoco had tried to drill for oil in that area in the 1980s and found very little, and drilling licences have previously been used to sanction fracking in other locations.

This rebellion in this Tory heartland has become an embarrassment to the Conservatives, and has attracted anti-fracking activists from across the country keen to make this their flagship. Currently local opposition stands at around 80% and the demonstrations have attracted over 2,000 people.

One resident who isn't demonstrating however is Simon Greenwood, the local

landowner and parish councillor who owns the wooded area the drill well is to be sited in. He stands to make a killing from it.

So what is fracking and why is it controversial? In layman's terms it involves pumping water under high pressure into the geology via a drill hole. This forces gas or oil out of the rocks and brings it up to the surface.

Unfortunately this has several possible negative side effects: the most dramatic of which is that it can lubricate geological faults and cause small earthquakes. This has already happened with Cuadrilla-controlled operations in Lancashire. But experts attempt to reassure with the claim that this is only possible where faults are already earthquake prone, perhaps why Surrey has been selected.

Less dramatic but more damaging is the potential for contamination of the underground water supply with toxic material released by the fracking process. Experts are quick to reassure people that the process is carefully isolated from the water supply, pointing out the drill well is insulated and the fracking occurs much deeper than the water table. But research in America carried out by the University of Texas found raised levels of methane, methanol and arsenic in water supplies near to fracking operations. This would seem to exclude coincidence, though it is not clear if the contamination is a direct effect of the fracking (chemicals released from it) or an indirect one (the effect of small tremors and vibrations on susceptible water wells).

Another serious problem is the amount of water used in the process. Each fracking well requires up to four million gallons of

water and thousands are planned for Britain, a problem where water is scarce. Given the frequent drought conditions in southern England this is a major issue. But perhaps the most subtle issue of all is the problem of the industrialisation of the countryside, with Blake's Dark Satanic Mills replaced by Dark Satanic Wells – a suitable rewording version of Blake's Jerusalem which has become the anthem of the protest.

So who is behind the operation? Cuadrilla was founded in 2007 by Dr Christopher Cornelius. Its current chairman is the scientist Dr John Browne, Baron of Madingley, who was a non-executive director of Goldman Sachs and the head of BP until his resignation in 2008. Browne had tried to greenwash BP during his stint as chief but there is no indication of any concrete change. Journalist Tom Bower claims that Browne was also responsible for severe cost cutting at BP that compromised safety and caused a number of accidents in the United States, including the Deep Water Horizon explosion, which hastened his departure.

Cuadrilla's main shareholder is the Anglo-American equity company Riverstone Holdings, with Australian engineering company A.J. Lucas Group holding 42% and Cuadrilla's management holding 15%. Browne is also a director and partner with Riverstone, which was founded by Goldman Sachs Global Energy & Power Group and works closely with the Carlisle Group.

Demonstrations continue at the site, which began with its entrance being blocked on 25th July by local protestors and the arrival of members of the Frack Off campaign on the 27th July. The activities of these protesters successfully shut down drilling on the 16th August, following police intelligence of imminent direct action. This was followed by a weekend of 'Reclaim the Power' workshops on the 17th and 18th August, on a site a mile from the drilling well. This was followed a day later by various direct action strikes on Cuadrilla property and the home of Francis Maude, the Conservative MP for the area. At the time of writing, a hundred protestors have been arrested and those on the site have been ordered to leave or be forcibly evicted. The action continues however, with the aim of the protest being not just the ending of the Balcombe operation, but its use as a high profile focus for a campaign against all fracking in Britain, particularly one of political importance given the cracks in the Tory Party rank and file it is creating.

The Balcombe operation itself may in fact be now doomed as its horizontal drilling phase appears to have contravened its planning permission, and negotiations have recommenced while drilling is suspended. But even if this is the case, the fracking scandal in this country may well be far from over.



Photo © Gary Sutherland

Activists and villagers protest against drilling equipment entering the the controversial Cuadrilla site at Balcombe on 6th August 2013.

London's burning

On the anniversary of the first 'Stop the City' march, Rich Cross looks back at this groundbreaking anti-capitalist institution

Thirty years ago this month, the first 'Stop the City' demonstration was held in the financial heartland of London: an anarchist-inspired confrontation with the institutions bankrolling the operation of British and international capitalism.

Called on 29th September 1983, to coincide with the quarterly calculation of the City's profits, protestors were encouraged to take part in a 'carnival against war' and deliver 'a day of reckoning' for the warmongers and racketeers of the Square Mile. Around 1,500 anarchists, libertarians, punks and radical peace activists descended on the City to occupy buildings, block roads, stage actions and swarm through the streets.

Cumulatively these efforts were designed to snarl up the operation of the capital's financial hub. In an analogue era, long before the City's 'Big Bang', when files and paperwork still had to be physically couriered between companies, the impact of mobs of unruly demonstrators filling the City's narrow streets could be dramatic. Estimates differed, but the occupation of corporate space interrupted scores of monetary transactions, and drove down the day's profits. The cost to those demonstrating was significant too: more than 200 arrests at the first Stop the City; nearly 400 at the March 1984 event; and close to 500 in September 1984.

Support for Stop the City came from two principal directions: from elements within the radical wing of the nuclear disarmament movement (which had been looking for ways to generalise and extend action beyond military bases) and from within the ranks of anarcho-punk (a subculture eager to test out its collective political muscle). But the audacity of Stop the City struck a chord with activists and militants from many other movements and campaigns.

The organisational catalyst for Stop the City was provided by a small group of activists associated with London Greenpeace and other independent campaign groups, who initiated a series of open and inclusive planning forums. The broad anarchism of Stop the City was (initially at least) strongly shaped by a commitment to nonviolence predominant amongst the influx of young new anarchist activists. The announcement of the first Stop the City in *Freedom* (16th July 1983) confirmed that: "The action is intended to be peaceful, not involving violence to people or other animals."



In the event, the few violent incidents during the first Stop the City were largely those of a frustrated City police force thoroughly outwitted by the actions of disruptive and highly mobile demonstrators. The *Evening Standard* dismissively reported that the financiers had been subject to "Peace, punks and a little City anarchy", but amongst that first wave of participants there was a widespread sense that they had taken part in something new and meaningful.

Plans for a far larger Stop the City came to fruition on 29th March 1984, when some 3,000 activists gathered for a follow-up event. *Freedom* (May 1984) reported the organisers' hopes that comrades would come together "to protest about the things they felt most strongly about and in the way they wanted." With larger numbers, more actions were possible: militant demonstrators broke bank windows, glued-up the doorlocks of companies, burnt flags and opened-up smoke canisters; others arranged musical processions, marched beneath huge puppets, handed out vegan food, or took part in an impromptu blockade of London Bridge.

As revealed in the documentary of the day filmed by members of Crass, Stop the City had become edgier and less instinctively non-violent: evidence of the shifting centre of political gravity within the wider anarchist milieu. But despite the impressive range of autonomous actions and the growing numbers on the streets, the March 1984 Stop the City was the last time that the initiative truly resided with the demonstrators.

After being out-maneuvred for a second time, the City of London police were determined to prevent the further growth of Stop the City. A third Stop the City (called

at 'short notice', in an effort to outwit the authorities, for 31st May) met an equally agile police response. The fourth Stop the City, held on 27th September 1984, was smothered by some aggressively pro-active policing: the assembly point in the City was sealed off and all likely-looking troublemakers were detained as soon as they arrived. Those who had taken up the suggestion to go in disguise (as City workers or maintenance staff) mostly evaded arrest, but then struggled to co-ordinate their actions. A few were able to rally forces in the West End and Trafalgar Square, but the impact had been lost.

Efforts were made to repeat the idea in other cities; and then to revive the approach through spin-off developments such as 'Stop Business As Usual', but these initiatives failed to match the scale, or capture the excitement, of the original Stop the City.

In the early 1980s, Stop the City reflected the growing confidence of the reviving British anarchist movement, but the speed with which it stalled also highlighted the movement's uncertainty about strategy, agency – and politics. In the context of the national 1984/85 miners' strike, these questions were being debated afresh as new class-struggle anarchist groups advanced to seize the initiative from anarcho-punk.

Although subsequent generations of activists have often overlooked the relevance of Stop the City, its imprint can be seen in such later initiatives as J18 and the activities of Reclaim the Streets. Stop the City was certainly a product of its political times, but its status as the largest and most innovative anarchist-inspired demonstration held in the UK during the early Thatcher years needs to be reaffirmed.

FEATURE

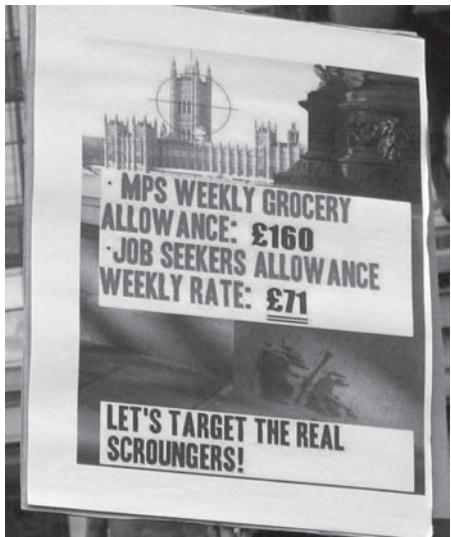
ANOTHER NIGHTMARE

Richard Challinor looks at why the brutal and badly thought out 'Bedroom Tax' is an affront to our freedom

The 'Welfare Reform Act 2012' was given Royal Assent (yes, in the 21st century), in March of that year, and in April 2013 the changes began to take effect, amongst these being what quickly became known as the 'Bedroom Tax'. The stated intentions of these changes are a single Universal Credit to make administration easier, and a fairer allocation of benefits. The word 'fairer' should be read as 'reduced'.

To a good first approximation, housing benefit is paid to people who rent, have personal savings below £16,000 and either claim other benefits, work part time, or work full time but earn a low pay. What constitutes low is decided by the local council. It's worth noting also that there will be a benefit cap rolling out this year, with the cap (under most circumstances) being £500 for couples with children, £500 for single parents with children, and £350 for single adults without children. £350 is just enough for a one bedroom flat in London, assuming you won't be needing to travel to work, buy clothes, gas or electricity. Or food. If you're after a bit more money, sustaining an industrial accident (weak labour laws should help) or fighting for oil in the Middle East will bag you a little more.

The bill was co-written by Ian Duncan Smith, who is a proud Thatcherite, a Roman Catholic, an ex-soldier and a millionaire, so we might expect him to be our sort of guy. Sadly not. In July he said to Parliament that the bedroom tax was "proving a success" and that council tenants with a spare room should "stop moaning about it".



Neighbours of Mrs Lockett in Kirby, Merseyside, are currently protecting her house from bailiffs; she is being forced to move because her house has spare rooms, and she is too poor to pay the new tax on them. I wonder if Ian will be offering up one of his spare rooms for her to move into?

So what's wrong with the bedroom tax? Before we bring our objections to bear here, let us first make an honest and self-critical appraisal. Are we against repossession? Or to tweak the question slightly, are we against appropriation? The difference should be salient. Where the owner of a seven figure mansion to fail to pay a mansion tax, would we gather round the property to repel the bailiffs? I ask because distinctions are important, and a philosophically robust but nuanced position is better than a clear but unprincipled one. I would hazard that we are not against repossession. So what is it we reject?

I will pursue two lines of thought, thought only as an adumbration, these being the coercion/power and utility/happiness. There are many other interesting and important points to be made – the nature of property, whether intrinsic rights exist and if so what they are – but they must be left for another day. A strong tradition in anarchism, and a point of pride that distinguishes it from other leftist movements, is the unrelenting distrust of power. Anarchism rejects rulers without rejecting cooperation, thereby disagreeing with many communists who say "if only the leaders are of the same class as the ruled, power is acceptable". Anarchism also rejects technocracy without rejecting expertise, a point that Mikhail Bakunin wittily captured when he wrote: "Does it follow that I reject all authority? Perish the thought. In the matter of boots, I defer to the authority of the boot-maker." Again there is so little space to do these concepts justice, we must leave them only faintly explored.

To return to our comparison, when viewed through the lens of power, why is a mansion tax acceptable and a bedroom tax not? When an impoverished, or elderly, or disabled, or juvenile person is given the stark 'choice' to move or be dispossessed, they are being coerced by a person more powerful than they. They would not move of their own accord, but are forced to at the tip of the baton. If the order to move were coming from a democratic assembly of equally empowered members, it would bring with it much more moral force. There would still be questions of majority tyranny to check for, and questions of the arbitrary or uncaring damage to another's wishes. But these problems don't even enter our furthest field of view – the orders come from entrenched power, vastly asymmetrical power, and so carry no moral authority.

The second objection, as I see it, is that the furnishings of this world are unevenly



shared, and this gives some people a greater chance of happiness than others. To be sure a consumerist lifestyle is at best a fickle companion of happiness (as Tyler Durden in *Fight Club* remarks: "The things you own end up owning you"), but while everything has a price, money is invaluable. For one person to worry about the next meal, where another can look forward to a second home, is obscene. In one of the rarer moments of decency, much of the world agreed in Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood". Notice the lack of caveats – it is not predicated on inheritance, or market returns, or natural gifts, or other caprices. We all deserve a happy life. As Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* asked: "Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions; fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, heal'd by the same means, warm'd and cool'd by

ARE



the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die?"

What observations are there made hold also for the bedroom tax, I think. Again the nuances creep in – can any person live anywhere they wish? In any house they wish? With as many bedrooms as they wish? Can every person live in a mansion just off Kensington Palace Gardens? I hazard there is too little space. So how to choose? There is much healthy debate to be had on this, but I would be so bold as to say that any anarchistic discussion would boil down two these words: fairness, equality, voluntarism. Are any of these evident in the bedroom tax? Is it fair to dispossess the poor while leaving the rich in abligurition and bedizement? Is it equal to have some at the blade of cuts and others holding the sacrificial cup? It is voluntary, to have a person choose between misery and the reaper?

Some comfort, though, to those who face the bedroom tax. While their choice is made between food and school clothes for their

children, others struggle with the adjustment to an inferior vintage of champagne, the difficulties of delayed bonuses being what they are. Unless you work for Ian Duncan Smith of course, in which case you share in

£44,000,000 of bonus money this year for doing such a good job of cutting benefits in the face of stiff public opinion. Utility is being calculated, but not everyone enters the equation. I can almost hear Cameron saying 'All people are equal, but some people are more equal than others'. It's not so much the bedrooms that are a surplus, as the people that own them.

It should be noted that the above objection, while I have labelled it as utilitarian, can also be underpinned by rights rather than utility. In his epic book *A Theory of Justice*, John Rawls put forward a principle that I think is admirable for its humanity, and interesting for its philosophical rigor. Rawls wasn't an anarchist, but his position shows how centre-left social democrats like him can and should act. He said: "Social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two conditions: (a) They are to be attached to positions and offices open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity; and (b), they are to be to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged members of society."

Drawing these ideas together, why is the bedroom tax immoral? Because it coerces persons, who are naturally and aspirationally free, into a situation that tramples their preferences and flourishing, so as to benefit those who already have too much. Percy Bysshe Shelley, in the preternaturally moving poem *The Masque of Anarchy*, describes a situation that, while having improved vastly since the Peterloo Massacre, is still to germane to our present day world.

What is Freedom? Ye can tell
That which Slavery is too well,
For its very name has grown
To an echo of your own.

'Tis to work and have such pay
As just keeps life from day to day
In your limbs, as in a cell
For the tyrants' use to dwell.



INTERVIEW

The Starving Arts collective

Freedom went to Brixton to attend an exhibition held by Starving Arts, an interdisciplinary arts collective who seek to raise awareness of sustainability and the issue of increasing food poverty in the UK.

The collective members:

- **Kylie Earl** is a London based artist/musician who graduated from the NFTS in 2009. She uses her music and film background to engage with co-operative development, multidisciplinary arts and youth development. Her interest in food growing is strengthened through connections to the Lambeth GP Food Co-op and Streatham Food Festival.
- **Addie Seriki** studied musical theatre at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance. After leaving university she realised that musical theatre wasn't her dream and she wanted something more challenging and creative. She wanted to find something that would give her full creative freedom and so became involved in Starving Arts.
- **Samantha Leigh Williams**'s artist name is Sounds of Fertile Beauty, meaning a moment of energy in life. She studied at Camberwell University of Arts in London and has exhibited around Europe. She works with found materials to express her fascination with Afro-Brazilian culture and the connection and role that food has in society, exposing her own environment to portray colourful but internally fearful subjects.

Freedom spoke to Kylie Earl about her involvement in the project.

Freedom: So how did you get involved in Starving Arts?

Kylie Earl: I'm a composer and a singer-songwriter. About three years ago I became a member of a studio collective called Studio Strike which used a space above the Bread



and Roses trade union pub. Around that time I met Addie and Sam at the Bar Etica music jams. We'd all been working on emboldened community initiatives before and we wanted to do something that combined that and the arts. The Starving Arts collective got going in June this year.

Freedom: What inspired you to pursue the food sustainability angle?

KE: I started networking with lots of city growers and became very interested in that side of things. I also felt inspired to make a statement on the issue of food banks and tie it in with that. I met with like-minded people who felt the same and so Starving Arts came into existence. At the moment I'm just networking further, learning more about how people grow food in the city. People don't network enough and the arts are a great medium for encouraging that as well as raising awareness. I want to use Starving

Arts as a platform to show how things are and how they could change.

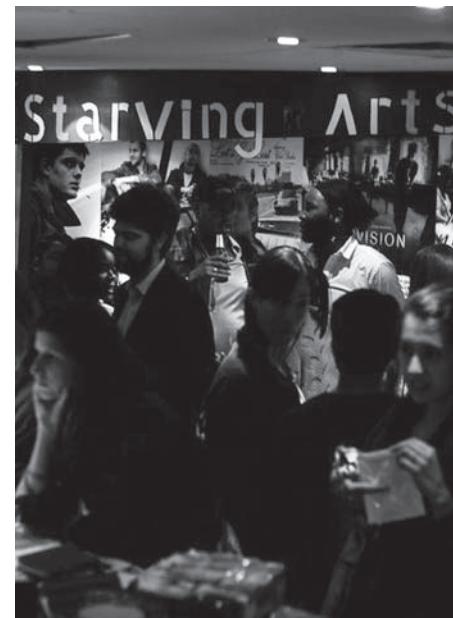
Freedom: What does the future hold for the collective?

KE: We're looking for a space at the moment, a hub. Somewhere to keep our stuff and hold events and, most importantly, somewhere with a garden. We see so many spaces that aren't being used and we're looking to find somewhere we can take over as a community space. We'd love to have food at the art events, too. We need our arts networking and food networking to really collide.

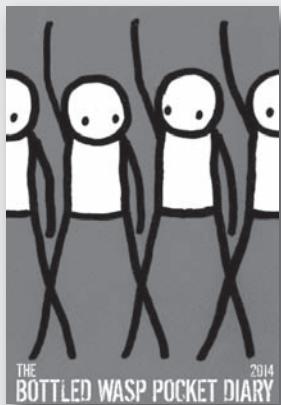
Starving Arts is about a free flow of creativity and a give and take that you don't often see in the mainstream art world. We just want to keep building on that.

Charlotte Dingle

For more information on Starving Arts, visit www.facebook.com/starvingartsevents



THE 2014 BOTTLED WASP POCKET DIARY



The *Bottled Wasp Pocket Diary* project was launched at last year's London Anarchist Bookfair by Brighton Anarchist Black Cross and friends, both to raise the profile of the ABC network's

activities and, more importantly, in order to raise much needed funds for prisoner support projects.

This first edition of this new radical European alternative to the US-centric *Slingshot Diary*, with its Clifford Harper cover illustrations, featured an introduction to prisoner support and general prison-related history and issues, and with each succeeding year we aim to focus on a new area of radical politics and history. Thus the 2014 *Bottled Wasp* highlights the history of radical arts and the contributions of anarchist theorists and artists, much of which still remains largely hidden. So there are features on the anarchist influences in the origins of Berlin Dada, No-Impressionism, both the Japanese and the Czech avant-gardes and Russian Anarcho-Futurism and its Italian counterpart (including the little known anarchist section of the Italian Futurists who did not follow Filippo Tommaso Marinetti into the Fascist Party).

There are also a number of pieces on anarchist sci-fi and detective fiction, as well as items on interesting and somewhat ignored characters including the novelist Octave Mirbeau, the Surrealist writer, poet, model, anarchist and anti-fascist Nancy Cunard and that rarest of animals, Mystag the anarchist magician. All that and daily and weekly notes on some of the most surprising of actors, artists, authors, composers, film directors, illustrators, librettists, muralists, musicians, novelists, painters, photographers, playwrights, rappers, screenwriters, sculptors, singer and songwriters who turned out to anarchists or who were significantly influenced by anarchist writers and activists that they came into contact with during their artistic lives.

The 2014 *Bottled Wasp Pocket Diary*, which this year features a cover by the mysterious London graffiti artist Stickman, will be available from the Bottled Wasp stall at the 2013 London Anarchist Bookfair on 19th October and also from project members Active Distribution.

<http://www.brightonabc.org.uk/bottledwasp.html>
<http://www.activedistributionshop.org/>
<http://www.facebook.com/bottledwasp>
<http://abcagenda.wikispaces.com/>

Hunger strike ends

Prisoners in California have stopped their 60-day hunger strike as lawmakers pledge to hold hearings on solitary confinement. Representatives of the Short Corridor Collective, organisers of the strike at Pelican Bay State Prison, said: "Our decision to suspend our third hunger strike in two years does not come lightly [but] in response to much sincere urging of loved ones, supporters, our attorneys and current and former state legislators." A few days before, chairs of the Senate and Assembly committees overseeing prison policy called for legislative hearings on the use of solitary confinement. The strike began in July this year and involved 30,000 prisoners across California at its peak, with 126 refusing food for the full 60 days.

Prisoners in Secure Housing Units (SHUs) at Pelican Bay coordinated their first hunger strike in 2011 to demand an end to the "warehousing of prisoners in torture chambers", where thousands of Californian prisoners endure long-term solitary confinement for "gang affiliation", based on evidence as flimsy as appearing in a photo with a gang member, owning drawings of gang symbols, or even reading a Black Panther book. Once 'validated' as a gang member, six years pass before review. Prisoners spend 23 hours every day in a bare concrete cell, with no windows and barely adequate food. Allowed out for 10 minutes to shower and to walk around an empty, high-walled concrete yard for one hour, there are no phone calls, no letters, and no human touch. A guard in a tower armed with a rapid-shot rifle and no-warning-shot policy controls the automatic locks that restrict the prisoners' movements.

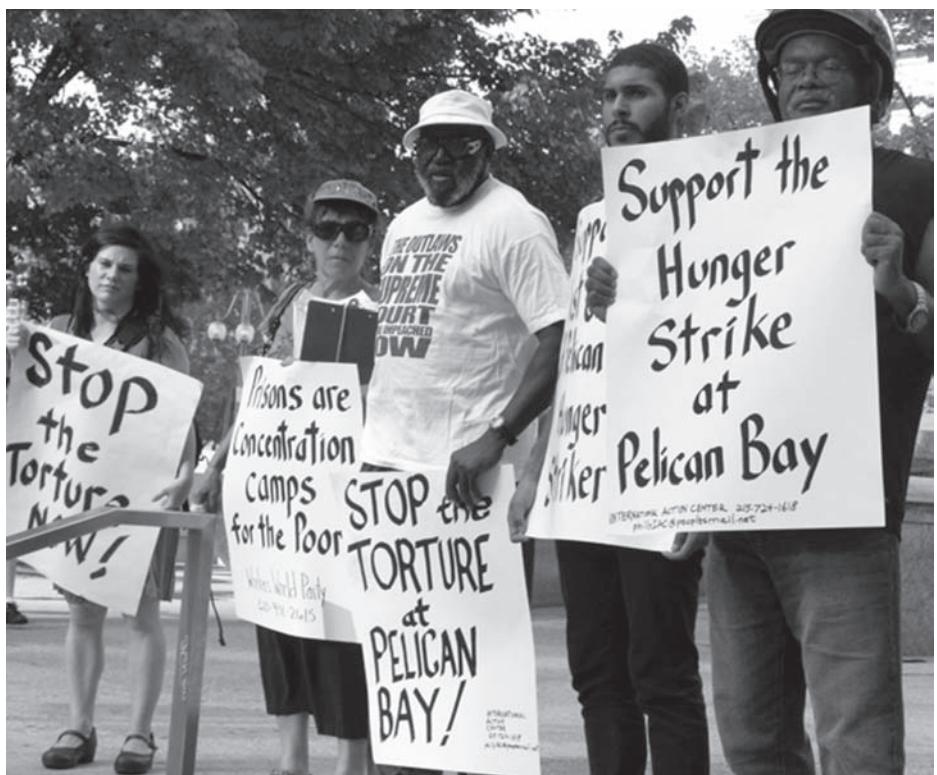
Five hundred prisoners have spent over 10 years in these 'living tombs', and 78 have endured this for more than two decades.

In July 2011, 12,000 prisoners refused food and after a month the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) agreed to take steps to release prisoners back into general population. A year later, in October 2012, the Collective resumed struggle and declared unprecedented unity among the different racial groups in the prisons, stating "We can no longer allow CDCR to use us against each other for their benefit... Collectively, we are an empowered, mighty force and we simply cannot allow CDCR to get away with their progressive oppression."

The 'Step down program' offered as a solution by the prison authorities provoked the 2013 hunger strike. The programme releases prisoners from solitary after three years, but only if they undertake the hated 'debrief': the prisoner must not only renounce the gang but inform on the whole gang, putting his own life and that of his family in jeopardy. For many, this is impossible, so the *status quo* prevails, and the struggle continues.

"Our goal remains [to] force the powers that be to end their torture policies... inflicted on tens of thousands of prisoners as well as our loved ones" said the Collective in their most recent statement. "We call for ending the practices of using prisoners to promote the agenda of the police state by seeking to greatly expand the numbers of the working class poor warehoused in prisons."

Louise Reynolds



COMMENT

ABOUT FREEDOM

ANGEL ALLEY

Starting with the good news that the EDL have once again been stopped from marching through Tower Hamlets by the combined efforts of the local community and committed activists. Plus, to be honest, being totally kettled by the cops, so commiserations to the 286 anti fascists arrested – any contributions to the defence fund are welcomed (cheques made payable to Legal Defence & Monitoring Group).

We continue to get donations of second-hand books, for which we are very grateful. We must also pay a tribute to long-term shop volunteer 'Reciprocal Altruism' who is moving to Scotland to further his studies. Rarely has any comrade devoted so many hours in the bookshop to playing on Facebook or got through so many sugar cubes without the bother of dissolving them in a cuppa first. You will be missed. And if you could pay for all the books you had on tick that would be nice too.

The London Anarchist Bookfair again looms over us and we hope to see loads of our readers on 19th October or at the Freedom Afterparty from 7pm at the shop where you can inspect repairs and improvements after the fire. There will be nibbles and refreshments but no loud 'pop and roll music so beloved of young people today', facilitating a relaxed and convivial soirée. However we still stick by our claim to provide a 'longer lock-in than the Apple Tree, better sound system than the Coronet'.

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The next issue will be dated October 2013 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 12th September. You can send your articles to us by email to copy@freedompress.org.uk or by post to 'The Editors', Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

A sideways look

by SVARTFROSK

I remember a friend telling me that liberals were important, because they get outraged at things that anarchists tend to not be surprised by. A good recent example is the Metropolitan Police admitting that they spied on the Lawrence family and friends in the immediate aftermath of Stephen Lawrence's murder. The police did this to try and neutralise the Family and Friends campaign that grew up in response to the murder itself and the police's handling of it. Stephen's friend, Duwayne Brooks, who had been with him on the night he was killed, was subject to regular harassment and publicly stated his suspicion that it was linked to his profile from the case. Stephen's brother Stuart lodged a complaint earlier this year after being stopped or searched by police more than once every year since the incident.

Liberals have quite rightly been outraged by the persistent low level harassment that the family has received, for nothing more than demanding justice. I'm not remotely surprised by it, as unlike liberals I don't see the police as a neutral institution that just happens to contain a few bad apples, most of whom apparently ended up on the original investigation. The police are an arm of the state, and behave as such. There are of course conflicts – senior coppers will take a view of what they call community relations while many will just act according to their prejudices. There is a reason that the police were found to be institutionally racist after the *MacPherson Report*: with all the will in the world, individual cops of whatever rank cannot change the way that the institution itself behaves. And the institution defends itself when under attack.

This is what I think they were doing when they spied on the campaign. It was in part damage limitation and in part looking for ammunition to use should they need to. There's something very unsavoury about this behaviour, but it also says something about the sort of society we are: would people really care less about a murder victim if they heard bad stories about his background?

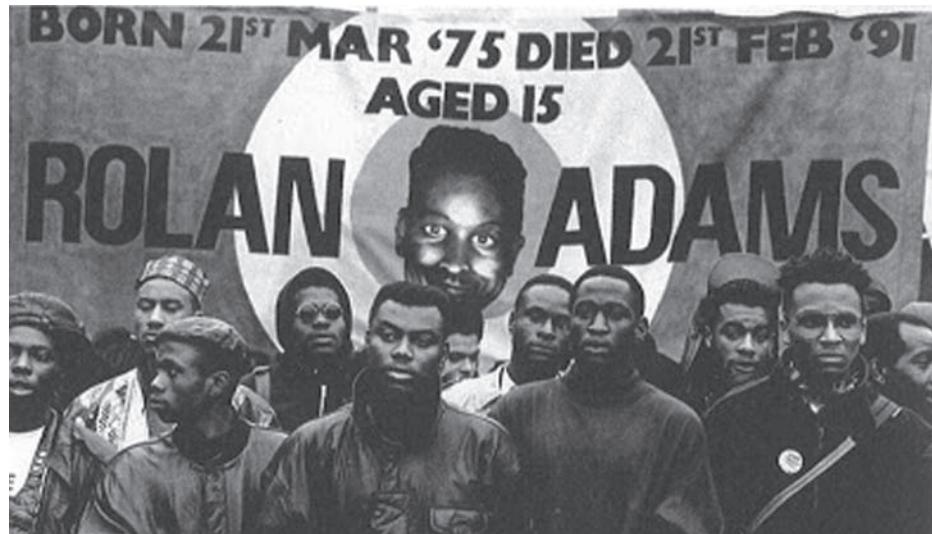
Evidently yes. This is corroborated by police spy Peter Francis, who infiltrated Youth Against Racism in Europe and has said he was instructed by senior officers worried about a response similar to the LA Riots after the beating of Rodney King. He said the police had sought to ensure the public "did not have as much sympathy for the Stephen Lawrence Campaign".

Stephen Lawrence was murdered in April 1993, but his wasn't the first racist murder in South East London around that time. Rolan Adams was stabbed in Thamesmead in 1991 by a group of fifteen thugs who shouted racist abuse at him. In 1992 Rohit Duggal was stabbed to death in Eltham.

All these murders drew a response from the families and from anti racists. I remember marching behind the Rolan Adams Family Campaign banner. Rolan had been with his brother Nathan visiting a friend in Thamesmead and they ran separate ways when confronted by the local racist gang. There was a lot of pressure on the family and the boys were painted in the press as having gang affiliations. As Nathan said in an interview with *The Voice*: "the authorities did not have any respect for us, and they were trying to portray us in a light that was ridiculous. It seemed as if the whole world was against my family." A conviction was secured for one killer, though his gang-mates got community service, even though all were well known for terrorising the local black community.

I can only guess whether there was a police spy involved, or at least deliberate disinformation put out by the Met (and how often have we seen that?). But there is more: David Osland, who was in overall charge of the original investigation, was criticised by MacPherson for saying "patience was wearing thin" with the Lawrences and the campaign in 1993.

It's a pattern of behaviour that recurs. It is an immense tribute to all the Family Campaigns – and there were far too many of them in the early 1990s – that they saw things through and continued fighting.



FEEDBACK

Out of the woods...

Sexual and racist abuse and other violence by guards have prompted regular protests, even hunger strikes, by women detained in Yarl's Wood. The same names of guards having sex with women in their care come up over and again. It appears to be so widespread that it is impossible for the authorities, including the Home Office, not to have known about it until it was publicly exposed. Women have been deported without the alleged rape being investigated. A cover up?

All complaints of abuse must be fully investigated and victims being released given protection so there can be no reprisals from guards who are in a position of power over them. Guards found guilty of perpetrating abuse or of enabling the abuse to go on must be held to account and prosecuted.

Black Women's Rape Action Project

For more information: All African Women's Group (aawg02@gmail.com, Black Women's Rape Action Project (bwrap@rapeaction.net), Women Against Rape (asylumfromrape@womenagainstrape.net). Tel: 020 7482 2496.

Home is where the heart is

The first step of the joint agenda established by the World Assembly of Inhabitants is a conference on the Right to Housing, in order to unify the Global Campaign for the right to housing and to land. The conference takes place from the 24th to 27th October in Tunisia.

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The central focus is the struggle against evictions, the foreclosures, the land grabbing and the persecution of activists. These matters involve all the inhabitants, both urban and rural all over the world.

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Out of the woods...

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A grave issue

A fundraising campaign has been started to buy a new gravestone for Harry Kelly, who was an important member of the early twentieth century American anarchist movement, a union militant, and a co-founder of the Modern School.

"It would hardly be possible to enumerate all the occasions on which Kelly participated during the years he spent in the revolutionary movement, at protest meetings, in strikes and demonstrations; and, in the all too often underestimated work of organising, he always stands in the forefront. A staunch friend of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, he worked with these comrades through many years, ere our wise rulers made the decision to deport them from the shores of America to Soviet Russia on the day of the tercentenary of the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers from the *Mayflower*. We humans realise only a small part of our dreams; Kelly is fortunate to have realised one of his supreme dreams: a social community and a school for children of proletarian parents in the country, far from the neveracking influence of the modern city" (taken from *Harry Kelly, an appreciation* by Hippolyte Havel, see [www.dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/coldoffthepresses/ havelkelly.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/coldoffthepresses/ havelkelly.html)). You can contribute to the campaign at www.indiegogo.com/projects/a-new-gravestone-for-harry-kelly.

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GETTING ACTIVE

WHAT'S ON

SEPTEMBER

- 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th London group of The Anarchist Federation meets weekly on Thursday evenings at Freedom Bookshop, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX. If you would like to attend please email london@afed.org.uk beforehand.
- 7th to 14th Week of action against DSEi, see www.stopthearmsfair.org.uk for more.
- 14th News from Nowhere Club presents *Conflict and Competition: The Rise and Fall of London's Docks in the nineteenth century* with speaker Dr Tom Wareham at The Epicentre, West Street, Leytonstone E11 4LJ, buffet 7.30pm, talk starts 8pm, see <http://www.newsfromnowhereclub.org/> or call 0208 555 5248 for details.
- 21st Swindon Radical Book Fair from 11am until 4pm at Central Community Centre, Emlyn Square, Swindon, SN1 5BL, see <https://www.facebook.com/events/429915787127188/> for details.
- 26th Reel News film night at The Grosvenor, 17 Sidney Road, Stockwell, London SW9 0TP, from 7.30pm until 11.30pm, see <http://reelnews.co.uk> for more.

OCTOBER

- 1st Radical Anthropology talks, *Claude Lévi-Strauss: The science of mythology* with Chris Knight at St Martin's Community Centre, 43 Carol Street, London NW1 0HT from 6.15 to 9pm, for further details see www.radicalanthropologygroup.org or Twitter: @radicalanthro.
- 1st and 15th Practical Squatting Evening at LARC, 62 Fieldgate Street, London E1 1ES from 7pm to 8pm, for more see <http://www.squatter.org.uk/>
- 8th Radical Anthropology talks, *Why does 'epeme' have to be danced at dark moon?* with Chris Knight at St Martin's Community Centre, 43 Carol Street, London NW1 0HT from 6.15 to 9pm, see www.radicalanthropologygroup.org or Twitter: @radicalanthro for details.
- 8th and 22nd Practical Squatting Evening at 56a Infoshop, 56a Crampton Street, London SE17 3AE from 7pm to 8pm, see <http://www.56a.org.uk/> for details.
- 12th News from Nowhere Club presents *Before the Plebs: Independent Working Class Education in the nineteenth century* with speaker Keith Flett at The Epicentre, West Street, Leytonstone E11 4LJ, from 7.30pm, see <http://www.newsfromnowhereclub.org/> or call 0208 555 5248 for details.
- 15th Radical Anthropology talks, *Darwinism and modern genetics: 'the science of solidarity'* with Chris Knight at St Martin's Community Centre, 43 Carol Street, London NW1 0HT from 6.15 to 9pm, for further details see www.radicalanthropologygroup.org or Twitter: @radicalanthro.
- 18th The Red & Black Club at LARC, 62 Fieldgate Street, London E1 1ES from 8pm, Dissident Island Radio will be broadcasting live as the local anarchists host a traditional east end knees-up.



● A new social centre is opening in London at 195 Mare Street, London E8 3QE. The 195 will be an open space where people can be comfortable with themselves, express their creativity, hang out, make new friends, network and attend various workshops and events. Everyone is welcome. The first spark of positive change in our world is when we meet and connect with others, sharing our joy and passing on knowledge. The official opening night will be on Friday 11th October, running from 7pm until late. See <http://195marestreet.wordpress.com/> for the latest news and more information.

● **Occupy London Tours** is a free tour company, run by (very well informed!) volunteers, who want to throw open the secretive world of finance and politics for all to see. The tours are designed to be informative, entertaining and – most importantly – accessible, aiming to enable people from London, the UK and all over the world to engage with the financial system and its impact on their lives.

On 17th October there's the Canary Wharf tour. Most people have never been to this revamped dockland in East London, yet the home of the financial services industry touches our lives everyday. This tour looks at the financial crisis of 2007/8 through the banks, ratings agencies and regulators clustered around Canada Square and discuss what – if anything – has changed since. Help us try to set up an offshore bank account at Barclays, make your very own 'credit default swap' and visit the last

resting place of the infamous Lehman Bros. This walk starts at 7pm and lasts for around an hour and a half.

On Saturday 2nd November it's the City of London tour, which tells the story of the UK's smallest city (really!), the history of money in the heart of London and the square mile's role in the financial crisis of 2007/8. Find out just what the Corporation of London actually is, why the Queen has to ask permission to enter the City and why the 'Black-Scholes equation' matters to you! Meeting at 2pm, the tour lasts around two hours.

For more information see <http://occupytours.org/>

● The Radical Anthropology Group's autumn 2013 sessions look at 'An Introduction to Anthropology: The Human Revolution'. Symbolic culture emerged in Africa over 100,000 years ago, in a social revolution whose echoes can still be heard in myths and rituals around the world. These talks are a general introduction to anthropology, including the latest findings from genetics, evolutionary biology, primatology, cave painting research and archaeology. There is hot food in the venue and plenty of time afterwards for socialising in local pubs. All talks are held at the St Martin's Community Centre, 43 Carol Street, London NW1 0HT on Tuesday evenings. See www.radicalanthropologygroup.org for details. For regular updates on meetings and anthropology news, follow us on Twitter (@radicalanthro) and Facebook.

Football and domestic violence

A recent study has highlighted that incidents of domestic abuse rocket during world cup football matches – rising even more if the team that the perpetrator supports, loses. The study was based on incidents ‘reported’ to Lancashire police between 2002 and 2010.

If England lost during a tournament, then incidents of domestic abuse rose by 38% on the day of the match. Interestingly there was still a significant 26% increase in incidents even if England had won their match. The spike in reported incidents continued for the next two days following the game, at around 11%.

Researchers highlighted several causal factors for shocking trends during tournaments. They state that the start of a prestigious tournament leads to a short term and concentrated rise in rivalry and aggression, which is then exacerbated by the increased commercialisation of the tournament.

This situation is then exacerbated further by the warm summer weather and a large increase in alcohol consumption.

The researchers believe that the findings are significant because they could lead to new ways to tackle domestic violence and to reduce the misery of abused partners as well as the children and family members. The lead for the research project stated: “I hope that the findings will encourage improved education around the links between major sporting events and peaks in domestic violence and greater awareness of the risk.”

Unfortunately the researcher’s managed to conduct their study without managing to see the elephant in the room.

The suggestion that football tournaments, warm weather, the commercialisation of sport, and increased alcohol consumption, are to blame for domestic violence is no different than suggesting that short skirts and women being out at night are to blame for rape! Whilst I can accept that the

circumstances highlighted in the study may have a short term impact on how people behave, the central issue is about patriarchy and gender oppression. By listing a series of social events that trigger instances of domestic violence, the researchers have unburdened some responsibility from the perpetrators.

The starting point in fighting the epidemic of domestic violence should be rooted in the struggle against patriarchy, not in trying to find ways of placating violent men when the match is on TV, or when he has a pint in his hand, or when it’s hot outside.

Luther Blissett



Football homophobia row

◀ page 24

media manager, Richard Lane, as ‘tongue in cheek’.

Many clubs and players have expressed their concern at the use of language by Paddy Power, but also the use of Paddy Power as a sponsor, especially in light of their recent problems with sexism in their adverts.

The campaign group, FvH (Football against Homophobia) has issued a statement: “It is incongruous to run a campaign aiming to change football culture whilst using language which reinforces the very stereotypes and caricatures that, in the long term, ensure that homophobia persists.” Many clubs, whilst agreeing and supporting the sentiment

of the campaign, have declined to participate, citing mixed messages, a lack of preparation, consultation and the commercial link to Paddy Power. Another issue that has been raised throughout the football world is the use of Joey Barton as an ambassador for the campaign. Barton is possibly the most revolting individual in football, and is once alleged to have made homophobic remarks towards fellow player Fernando Torres. It is fair to say that he is not exactly ambassador material.

I first became aware of the campaign when it was being discussed recently on a satellite television station football programme. There were five presenters and pundits on the programme, all of whom were wearing the

laces. Over the next few minutes all five of them fought over who could be the most ‘right on’ about homophobia in football. The presenter pointed out that one of the pundits had once posed semi-naked for a French gay magazine in the 1990s. Before he could move on to the next item, the pundit in question hurriedly jumped in with words to the effect of ‘I am not gay though’, which was met with sniggers by the pundits off camera.

It’s a real shame that an important issue and well-meaning campaign is set to be side-tracked with the same problems and tokenism that have plagued the FA anti-racism campaign.

Luther Blissett

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REVIEWS

FICTION

Up time-sheet creek

Dougal Mackenzie, the increasingly exasperated manager of the outsourced services at Hurstbourne College, stared at his coffee. None of the IT team had filled in their time-sheets. LobCo was a results-driven business and this would not play well. This was a new one for him. He sipped the coffee and winced, it was cold. He gulped, picked up the phone and spent half an hour talking to Clive Alison, his superior.

"Ged, can you come into my office?" called MacKenzie.

"How are you getting on in the LobCo family?" asked MacKenzie as Ged ambled over and sat down.

"Eh?" said Ged. "What does that mean?"

"Well, LobCo is like a family, different companies in the group, all dedicated to excellent service."

"Doesn't sound like any family I know. My brother and my dad haven't spoken in three years, is that what LobCo are like?"

"No, no of course not. I just meant... well, how are you finding it?"

"Do you want an honest opinion?" asked Ged.

"Of course," replied MacKenzie.

"Well I'm not happy. Loads of bureaucracy, stupid rules, overtime messed up, no kettle or coffee machine..."

"Okay, I get the picture. What I wanted to ask you particularly was the new time sheets and when you are going to do yours?"

"Oh that." Ged smiled. "I'm not going to do it."

"Why not? It is a perfectly reasonable request from your manager and forms part of your contracted duties."

"Er, no. It doesn't. I've had clear guidance from my union on this. I would suggest you talk to them," said Ged. "And if that's all, I've got work to get on with."

Mackenzie tried a similar conversation with three other members of the team, with similar results. He got the list of people having union deductions from Human Resources. There were none in the current team. He had no idea who was or wasn't in the union.

Two hours later, MacKenzie had finally got hold of the union secretary. They had a short terse conversation. He called Clive again.

"Yes, it appears that we haven't updated the Staff Handbook, and therefore cannot enforce this contractually," he told him. Clive told him that he'd have to do it if the staff wouldn't. MacKenzie put the phone down. He opened a browser and typed in 'jobsearch'.

Martin H.

To be continued...

FILM

The East

directed by Zal Batmanglij

This slick and highly original US indie film cleverly twists genre conventions before collapsing under the weight of exaggerated and conflicting expectations. Social issue laments for ecological destruction morph into contemporary espionage and conspiracy, then heist thriller and action movie. Sarah Moss (Brit Marling) heads up an initially conservative intelligence operative which infiltrates a clandestine band of hippy anti-capitalists. The group is plotting increasingly murderous punishments for greedy conglomerates guilty of outrages against the natural world (oil spills), human environment (chemical waste) and bodies (drugs with lethal side effects) by visiting the same blights on the persons of their chief executives. Perpetrators and victims on both sides deploy comparably skilful information-gathering and PR, but the stunts devised by our unfeasibly effective and secure internet-working activists are so successful as to force corporations to change policies or face plummeting share prices. Still, no agenda beyond a slightly 'kinder' capitalism appears on the horizon, and to be sustainable even this requires Sarah's shifting loyalties to appeal to the ethics of her peers – scant reward for a presumed multitude of (or even these few) militant lives devoted to saving the planet.

The handling of acutely topical themes with an arguable degree of realism, along with explicitly oppositional responses, has been interpreted by critics as inaugurating a 'post-

Occupy' cinema, despite being conceived and developed well beforehand. Nevertheless, though aiming to flatter younger environmentally-concerned publics, the narrative predictably recuperates any 'direct action' propaganda value by patronising and ridiculing its protagonists even while tentatively legitimising their grievances. Rich-kid cult-fanatic characters self-righteously prop up fragile egos, with childish rituals substituting for organic sociality, solidarity and community. Yet even these more or less likeable fools scare the shit out of the rich and powerful, implying that their tactics have traction where respectable alternatives conspicuously and miserably fail.

The denouement is far more implausible than the likely efficacy of the 'extreme' vision on offer, despite no meaningful ideology or strategy among its radical proponents ever being enunciated. Their Old Testament 'eye for an eye' justice implies neither cure nor prevention. Meanwhile, the daft idea that thoroughly Machiavellian corporate entities would countenance rogue employees stealing personnel data wholesale and suborning colleagues via globetrotting exhortation to moral conscience surely similarly reveals the tired limits of timid reformism. Viewers may conclude that neither choice is anyway within their realm of personal possibility, with cynical passivity an intelligible reaction even if *The East* entertainingly raises questions mainstream cinema normally avoids.

Tom Jennings

<http://libcom.org/blog/tom-jennings>



QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Lehman Brothers.
2. Around 150. It came from research by evolutionary psychologist Robin Dunbar and anthropologists into the size of clans, and in effect all human groupings. Once a grouping grows above 150 its members start to lose touch with each other. It has since been adapted into a number of other fields, such as economics and business.
3. The 21 year old from Germany worked

three 24-hour shifts in a row (yes, 72 hours without a rest) and was found dead in the shower at his flat. The Bank concerned are going to look at their "long hours culture".

4. The company running the hospital, Circle Holdings plc, lost £3.7M running the hospital. So, Circle went to the government for a £3.5M loan to "fund essential improvements to the hospital".

Discordant voices

Jamie Ranger reviews the tale of three generations of Italian anarchists

Cazzarola! is a historical novel set over the course of three generations in Italy that deals with trade union strikes, the rise of fascism and the contemporary treatment of the Romany gypsy population, seen principally through the eyes of the Discordia family. The book produces moments of piercing satire: an interview with a horny, misogynistic senator, policemen indifferent to the violent vigilantism of the far-right in the face of an apoplectic eyewitnesses, and passages that underscore the rise of Il Duce in both the public and private domain. However, the novel is overburdened with bizarre choices of framing devices, and narrative failings which undermine the issues of social injustice affecting the central characters.

The biggest problem with the novel is the inconsistency of the narrative voice. The novel is broken up into numerous sections in a manner that in many ways resembles an academic work, and is framed in a non-linear approach. The reader moves from one era to the next, often without the central characters as a guide, in order to show snapshots of life in Italy. Ironically, some of the strongest passages are these aforementioned snapshots, such as a reporter's investigation of a gypsy camp's wretched living conditions, or the first-person introspection of a would-be assassin. However, due to this absence of a single voice in the novel, the plot appears at best fragmentary and haphazard, and feels more like a collection of short stories tenuously connected through a family tree rather than a totality.

The first narrative voice we are introduced to is that of the eldest Discordia, a great grandfather figure, who reveals that he is in some sort of ambiguous 'spirit realm' – a jarring piece of fantasy in a work grounded in social realism – and is relaying to us the stories of his ancestors; clumsy, but endearing, and it would have been a sufficient framing device, but he isn't the narrative voice of the story. The novel flicks between moments in time as if it suffers from attention-deficit disorder, switching between narrative voices with each passage. The reader has third-person perspective views on a trade union squabble, and then is sent within a few pages to a first-person perspective assassination attempt. During certain passages, we switch between third and first-person perspectives, as well as the past and present tenses, all in one paragraph. If the great-grandfather is set up as the focal point of the framing device, his should be a consistent and familiar presence, especially if you're going to meddle in the postmodern.



The fifth rule of writing according to Mark Twain is that "when the personages of a tale deal in conversation, the talk shall sound like human talk, and be talk such as human beings would be likely to talk in the given circumstances", and this serves to highlight an issue that hinders character development throughout the novel. The main character relationship is the burgeoning romance between Antonio and Cinka, and yet they have no discernible connection to one another other than a burning desire to teach anyone who is listening in on their conversation about their different world views. Their first meeting quickly develops into a contrived lesson in cultural sensitivity rather than the tentative interactions of young people in the throes of lust. An incident concludes with them falling immediately in love. We know this because the writer makes the bizarre decision to switch between third and first-person accounts of their interaction, with the narrator telling you what the character is feeling rather than showing through their character's interactions with each other. When they do interact, an abundance of clunky dialogue emerges. Cinka states things such as, "I have a mother, sister and brother" when "I have a family" is more natural and contextually appropriate; she offers toe-curlingly awkward compliments such as "your eyes are happy and sad", and "your lips are like a ripe fig". Their first official date is a day out to a zoo and which story does Cinka deem appropriate for their gentle sojourn? Why, the historical massacre of her people by the Turks, and how they successfully avoided the attempted genocide.

It's like they're from different worlds!

Anyone described as a gruff anarcho-syndicalist is merely a two-dimensional device for spouting radical political platitudes and anybody who is described as Romani is a similar cipher for the purposes of learning about their culture. The whole novel feels weighed down by a need to show the reader that research has been well and truly done, but we don't feel as if we are looking at real people. We get clean and efficient descriptions of their traditional Italian meals, but every character interacts like a twenty-something north American, with phrases such as "the big cheese", saying that food tastes 'awesome', with anarchists wanting to "beat the crap out of those guys". These colloquialisms occur not just in dialogue, but also within the context of narrative exposition, as the supposedly ethereal great grandfather narrator uses the phrase, "it's game on" to announce the beginning of a trade union dispute. These bizarre choices take the reader out of their timeframes, and into an altogether different psychological landscape.

People who we have been briefly introduced to for less than a paragraph tell us about the struggle between the workers and the bourgeoisie, and the inevitability of fascism, but why should we take a stranger's word for it? The plot is difficult enough to follow as it is, even if you have a decent understanding of the history and politics of the time – and when you have that already, you learn nothing new from the didacticism of the text. We never see the lives of the bourgeois,

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THE ARTS

INTO THE FIRE

"Are you a fucking KIKE you piece of bag lady shit fucking degenerate motherfucker? Only a fucking KIKE can spread all this filth and lies... do you take it up the ass you fucking puke bag? How about that other blowjob slut you had with you asshole? Someone ought to put a slug on your head so people like you can stop polluting the earth with your presence... I'm talking to you the uploader the fucking journalist... fucking filthbag."

This is just one of the hundreds of death threats and abusive messages we have received from Golden Dawn members and supporters since the release of our film. All of which are gratefully received as the highest of compliments.

In March 2012 a chance encounter with a 16 year old Somali refugee in Athens led to a six month project resulting in *Into the Fire*, the first full length documentary produced by Reel News.

Our release strategy, devised by Kate Mara, has resulted well over 100,000 views on YouTube with many more on Vimeo. Hundreds of websites have used our freely-available embed code to ensure wide distribution in ten different languages. More recently the film was broadcast by the occupied ERT channel in Greece, much to the disgust of its conservative government and loathsome neo-nazis.



Photo © Guy Smallman

As well as documenting the plight of refugees and migrants in Europe's most broken country, we also examined the relationship between the fascism and the Greek state. Vulnerable asylum seekers remain trapped by EU legislation in a country that is becoming increasingly hostile to their presence. It is

also becoming clear that Golden Dawn's murderous gangs operate with the blessing of New Democracy and the Police.

Guy Smallman

Into the Fire will be touring Europe for a series of events and screenings this coming month. See www.intothefire.org for details.



Photo © Guy Smallman



Photo © Guy Smallman

Book review

◀ page 21

of the fascist, of the factory owner, in any real detail, so the account seems disjointed, incomplete and too obviously biased to be persuasive for the non-anarchist fiction reader. There is an impassioned speech by one of the Discordias about signing up to the army and being in the bunkers facing off against the Austrians, and yet despite being on a relentless quantum leap, we don't ever see that first-hand, the reader just gets exposition in somebody's kitchen whilst

faceless characters trade disparaging remarks about the US military-industrial complex.

Sadly, Cinka is by far the character with the most potential, and has by far the most interesting story to tell, but the novel is distracted by its own promise to show us the history of anarchist ideals during the time period, and thus throws the Discordias into the limelight more often than it ought to.

To conclude, *Cazzarola!* is an admirable, but over-ambitious debut, damaged by its

overdeveloped history lessons, but underdeveloped characters. However, it may serve as a decent supplement for anyone studying the period that needs a break from dense historical texts. For fans of historical fiction or family saga novels, there's no need to abandon Mantel or Faulkner.

Cazzarola!: Anarchy, Romani, Love, Italy (A Novel) by Norman Nawrocki, published by PM Press, £12.99.



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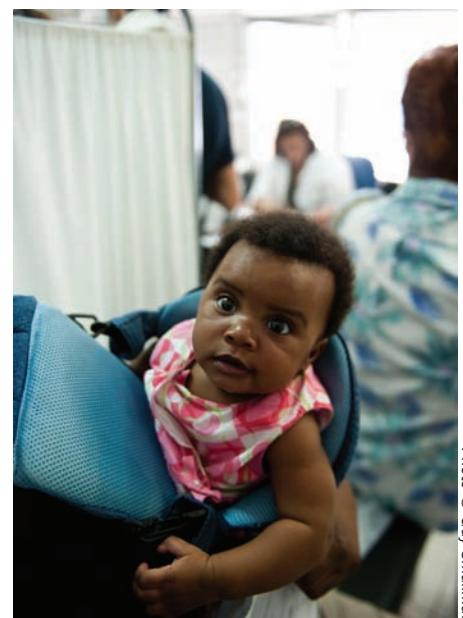


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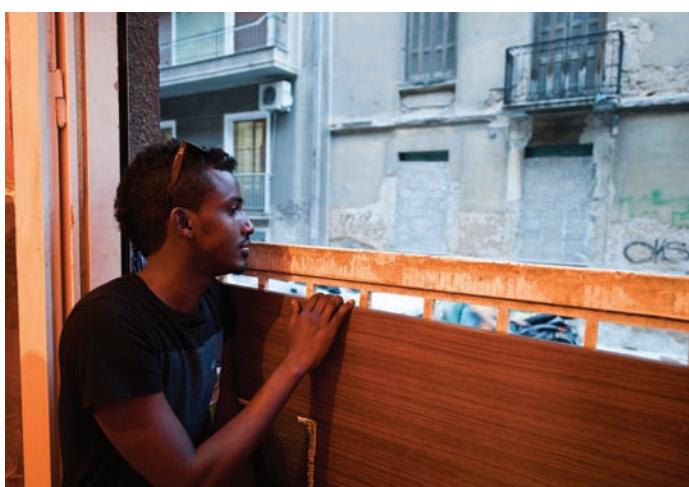


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SPORT

Football homophobia row



In September all 134 professional football league clubs are being asked to show their support for gay players by wearing rainbow coloured bootlaces. The scheme has created by the football league and their charity partners, Stonewall.

The scheme has already caused controversy, and whilst some clubs and players have immediately signed up, many more have declined to participate.

The scheme was initially conceived after a Stonewall report highlighted that seven in ten football fans had witnessed homophobia at football matches. Stonewall state: "The simple act of swapping laces will highlight the issue of homophobia in our national game and get football fans talking."

Unfortunately, in a similar manner to their anti-racism campaign, 'kick it out', the FA's attempts at combating homophobia, whilst

stimulating debate, is being talked about for all the wrong reasons. The first that most clubs knew of the campaign was when they received a parcel covered in the logo of bookmaker Paddy Power, which included the straplines, 'We don't care which team you play for' and 'Right behind gay footballers', which have been described by Stonewall's

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THE QUIZ

1. In the film *Despicable Me*, arch-villain Gru visits the Bank of Evil. According to its strapline, what was it formerly known as?
2. What is the Dunbar number?
3. What happened to Moritz Erhardt, who worked as an intern for Merrill Lynch in the City?
4. Part of the government's justification for handing over Hinchinbrooke Hospital to a private company was to save money. How has that worked out?

Answers on page 20

The Anarchist Quiz Book by Martin Howard, illustrated by Paul Petard, is available at £5 post free from www.freedompress.org.uk or from our bookshop.

